



Issue 2 June 2010

Welcome to our newsletter. I, Emma Campolucci, was voted in as Chair of Parents' Voice Steering Group. The other members of the committee are as follows:

- Marcus Seale – Treasurer
- Rachel Adams - Secretary
- Sue Onions (who is also the parent representative at the Children's Trust board)
- Wendy Plumpton
- Clair de Groot
- Jacquie Gordan
- Hazel Hyman

Before having my children, I was a communications consultant and so getting the right message, to the right people at the right time, is something I was really passionate about.

We all know when communication is poor, I'm not talking about spelling mistakes or grammar. I'm thinking more about assuming you know something, using jargon or simply not telling you at all.

This is one of the reasons the **Parents' Charter** was designed and you'll find out more about that overleaf.

I'll finish now by telling you I firmly believe in "without any involvement there is no commitment" – as a committee there are many projects which would benefit you and all parents in Worcestershire. However if we are to be representative of parents, then we need your views and support. So whenever possible please do share your ideas, concerns and experiences with us. See over leaf for different ways to keep in touch.

Many Thanks, Emma Campolucci,
Chairman of Parents' Voice

Schools win Leading National Parent Engagement Award

Eleven Worcestershire schools have won the prestigious national Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA).

Eleven schools have worked to develop different ways parents and carers can be involved in their school for the past 18 months. Areas they have worked on are home school communication, transition between schools, family and adult learning.

Activities have included regular open mornings for parents to come in and share lessons with their child, parent-friendly text messaging systems and stay and play sessions where parents have a chance work with their child in the classroom.

Cllr Eyre, Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (aged 12-19), said: "I congratulate these schools on obtaining this prestigious award. This latest round of achievements, coupled with those schools that have already gained this status shows how well Worcestershire's schools are working with parents for the benefit of children and young people and that parents are welcoming the opportunities to be further involved. This is really good news and well done to everyone involved."

For more information, contact Rachel Adams, Worcestershire County Council's Parent Engagement Advisor on 07595 091200.

Transition to Secondary school

My eldest son transferred from primary to secondary school at the beginning of this academic year. The primary school he left had 150 children in total, whereas his new secondary school has over 230 pupils in Year 7 alone. As a parent, my experience of secondary school has been incredibly different to that of primary. And very different for my son too. He loves it and has gained so much knowledge, skill and confidence, he's met many different children and made a lot of new friends. For me it's been a different story and I've been left feeling as though I've lost touch with school life.

The information evenings for parents and pupils held before he joined the secondary school were excellent. Information about the school, tutors and what would be expected of my son was great. They told us how the pupils were to be independent and emphasised that parents were still important and how it's crucial we work together and in fairness they get in touch if there's an issue. It's a high achieving school, has outstanding Ofsted results and staff that have won national awards.

Since joining the school, however, there's been less than I thought there would be for parents, no newsletters, no PTA and no Parent Forum and, for me, no feeling of being a part of the school community. As a parent, I don't feel as though I belong, not in the way I did at primary. It seems such a large business and parents seem surplus to requirements. There's very little that comes home and although you can search for information on the school website, it isn't always kept up to date. In fairness, my son's tutors do get in touch if there is an issue, so I can't fault the staff.

For me, it's been a feeling of being cut off from a part of my son's life that I wasn't expecting and which wasn't the experience I had when he first started school at the age of four. I've always been very confident and keen for my son to be independent of me but I guess I just wasn't prepared for the difference when he moved to secondary school or how I would feel. Of course, I'm very happy that he's made the transition and is very settled at school and I can't fault the academic side of things. So for me the transition to secondary school was a big shock, but one that I'm coming to terms with, nearly a year on!

Clair de Groot

Parents' Charter

A Parents' Charter is a statement of how organisations who provide services to parents, will work with parents. A service provider could be a doctor's surgery, a school or even the police. The charter will be something that an organisation publicly displays so all parents are aware of the standards the organisation is aiming for. For example, included in the charter are statements like "we will not use jargon when communicating with Parents and we will use plain English at all times". How does this help you as a parent? If you know an organisation is signed up to the charter and you receive a communication from them that is impossible to understand, then you can challenge the organisation. From a service provider's point of view this promotes their commitment to working jointly with parents. Parents' Voice aims to launch this during Parents' week in October. If you know of any service providers who you feel would be interested in signing up to the Parents' Charter, please contact us at info@parentsvoice.co.uk.

Parents' Week (w/c 25th October)

Parents' week takes place from 25th October and is held in half term. The Parents' Voice Steering Group aim to put together a programme of activities to celebrate the amazing and frequently challenging job of parenting!

If you have any ideas you would like to share with us then please get in contact, bearing in mind we don't have the deepest pockets.

Communication – Keeping in touch

www.parentsvoice.co.uk – Parents' Voice website

www.twitter.com/parentsvoicewor - Parents Voice on Twitter

Parents Voice Worcester – Parents Voice on Facebook with photos and discussions

Email – info@parentsvoice.co.uk

Telephone – 07595 091200

Address – Parents' Voice Steering Group, PO Box 753, Worcester, WR4 4BA